

Madison County Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
July 30, 2020

On Thursday, July 30, 2020, a meeting of the Madison County Board of Health came to order at 5:09 p.m. via web/phone.

Board Members in attendance were, Douglas B. Young D.V.M, Melinda Tichenor - MVMC Lab Director, Dayna Therghesen – CPNP, Whitney Marsh – RN Ennis Schools and Margaret Bortko – FNP, DNP Clinical Professor MSU. Also in attendance were Melissa Brummell – MCPHD Director, Jennifer Martens - Public Health Clerk, Mikayla Hudson – 4H, Kendra Horn – Sheridan School Board, Van Puckett – Sanitarian, Mike Wetherbee – Sheridan School Superintendent, Bonnie O'Neill – Chief Administrative Officer, Joe Brummell - Department of Emergency Services, Erin Montgomery - MCPHD Tobacco, Walker Van Wagoner - MCPHD, Thad Kaiser – Twin Bridges School Superintendent, Steve Johnson – Twin Bridges Board Chair, Fred Hofman – Harrison School Superintendent, Pam Birkeland – Superintendent of County Schools, Hannah Kearse – The Madisonian, Cindy Perdue Dolan – Senator Daines Representative and Melissa Rodgers - LureMeln. Community members: Elizabeth Barnett, Kathleen Mumme, Kerry Pride, Karen Talley, Luke Cordingly, Ke'lah Savage, Kristina Cordingly, Sheri Jarvis, Therese Sutton, Harley Sprinkle, Darcy Wheeler, Christy Todd, Emily Osborn, Kristie Turck, Beth, Amy Kelley, Mary Oliver, Chris, Re, Dana Escott, Shaleena Walter and various others phone numbers from the public that did not identify themselves.

Madison County Current COVID-19 situation

Melissa Brummell reviewed slides on Madison County's COVID-19 status. In Governor Bullock's press conference Madison County was listed as a "hot spot". A hot spot is an area where community transmission is occurring with no known source. On the latest list, Madison County is the smallest county in Montana to be determined a hot spot. We are only 3rd place per 100,000 behind Big Horn and Garfield counties for worst counties of disease spread. The charts presented do not include seasonal & out of state positives. Cases are counted by their place of permanent residency. This is how it is done for all communicable diseases. However, if someone is temporarily living here or working here the Public Health Department is still having to investigate those cases, determine where they should be counted and, in most cases, we are working their isolation and quarantine since they are residing here during that time. For the current and up to date information we have the 9:30 am spot at the Tuesday County Commissioners meetings and there is a Community COVID-19 update meeting Tuesday nights at 6:00pm via GoToMeetings. There's also information on the Madison County Public Health Department Facebook page, county page and weekly press releases as needed. If you would like to review the Board of Health agenda or minutes please see the Madison County website under agenda & minutes. A few questions presented: 1) What is an active case? Answer: An active case is a person in an infectious state. Sometimes we get positive's after their infectious period has ended. They would skip the active cases and head directly to the recovered status. They only stay in the active phase until they are no longer considered active & infectious. Each case is different and must meet certain criteria before they can move to the recovered phase. Generally, it is 10 days from symptom onset or the positive result. 2) Is a 2nd test required? Answer: CDC does not require a 2nd test in most circumstances.

Some specialty fields do require it. 3) How is your testing supply situation and are you getting your results back? Answer: results are coming in quicker but the state has also stopped most surveillance testing so the labs can get caught up. We are currently only testing symptomatic or close contacts. They are generally taking 24-48 hours. We still have some surveillance type tests from the middle of June we are waiting for.

Reassess Phase 2 Governor Bullock's guidelines for a change in recommendations

Nothing new on this topic at this time.

Reassess Events over 50

Public Health would like the Board to consider not allowing any events over 50 people unless it has already been reviewed. This request is due to staff shortage and all manpower on investigations and contact tracing for COVID-19. We are a small public health department with only 4 full time employees. We were just approved to bring on 2 temporary employees to help contact trace. We just don't have enough time to review these plans in a timely manner. The Board did not address the request. Mikayla Hudson with Madison County 4H addressed her fair revision plan. Question: 1) If the fair event has over 50 people will masks be mandated or suggested when social distancing is not possible per the Governor's directive? Answer: Dayna read part of the Governor's directive. She believes the mandate is only for settings where social distancing is not possible. As long as you are 6 feet away from someone you should be ok without a mask. An email titled masks and fair with a response from Justin Ekwall, Madison County deputy attorney was read in part by Melissa Brummell regarding the State mask mandate. An excerpt from the email states: Masks need to be required at all indoor spaces no matter what. Masks also need to be required on the fairgrounds during the fair unless we are going to limit the number of people at the fair to less than 50. From a liability standpoint we do need to make sure that all vendors/staff/volunteers are wearing a mask. I don't see anything in the directive that requires us to provide masks, but it's not a bad idea. I'd recommend ejecting someone from the fair if they are specifically warned about the mask policy and refuse to put one on. Primarily we need to worry about our own staff/vendors/volunteers, people that are being very obvious/brazen, and anyone that someone complains to us about. Mikayla stressed this revision is only for the 4H events. Van spoke to Justin today and he is fine with us going along with the Governor's directive but the Board can make more stringent guidelines if they choose to do so. Dayna Thergesen made the motion to approve the Madison County Fair safety plan as written. Margaret Bortko seconded the motion. Melissa Brummell reminded the Board that they cannot vote on this item since it was not placed in specific on the agenda. Melissa stated that her and Van can review and make decisions on the revision as stated in the approval letter. The Board agreed to allow Melissa and Van to review the revisions.

Review School Plans

The Board of Health received a draft copy from all Madison County Schools on their reopening plans. The schools would like any input the Board has to offer. Public Health is working on symptom guidance for the schools. Dayna has a resource link that she thinks will be useful <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/> .

One of their concerns was that most symptoms are a crossover of other typical illnesses. They would like some more guidance from a nurse before sending everyone home with a runny nose. Currently Ennis is the only school with a nurse. Twin Bridges and Sheridan are interested in having a nurse come to their facility to

help out. Fred Hofman with Harrison School suggested to limit exposure we could look into a telemedicine. Cindy with Sen. Daines office will look into funding and telecommunicating devices. A few questions presented: 1) Will there be onsite testing for kids if the child is sick? Answer: No, the school would call the parent to pick them up and it would be recommended they call their healthcare provider for testing assistance and guidance. 2) How will Public Health work with the schools with a positive case? Answer: Public Health will work with the school with identifying close contacts. It will be similar to how we work with businesses. 3) If we have a positive case in the school should we shut it down for at least 48 hours to clean? Answer: Van the Sanitarian doesn't believe it would be necessary. However, the school should be sanitized and deep cleaned. He is available to talk in specifics offline for more info. He did suggest that all staff get trained on cleaning practices. 4) If we know of a positive case before you do in our schools do we need to report that? Answer: Yes, it is treated the same as other reportable conditions & issues. 5) Why is there a discrepancy from county to county on positive case information sharing such as which community in particular? Answer: This is a topic on the agenda so this will be addressed there. 6) How did Sheridan School come up with their phase numbers? 43 active cases would be crisis mode not the time to start distance learning. Answer: Mike Wetherbee answered that the last census was showing Madison County at about 8700 people. Half a percent of 8700 is 43 people. A whole percent is 87 people. I based my numbers off of a half percent of all the residents of Madison County and based our number at 43 -87 active cases off those numbers. 7) If the Public Health Department has primary contact with someone that tests positive for COVID and are asked to quarantine for 14 days and get tested is that a requirement or a recommendation? Answer: That would be a public health order. It is a requirement. Quarantine and Isolation orders are a public health requirement. We do not do currently require testing. 8) I read recently that you can't test out of a quarantine, is that true? Answer: The test is going to tell if you are currently infected. It is not going to predict if you will become infected and a spreader of that disease over that 14-day window. It tells us in that investigations that if you have close contacts if your positive we need to look into it further and get them tested also. It is a prevention strategy. 9) Some people have been sent back to work during their quarantine period. Is that an exception that will be extended to schools? Answer: Essential workers can make arrangements with their business to return to work with certain guidelines. However, they must quarantine when not at work. 10) I thought I saw a mandate or guidance from CDC to say quarantine would be 10 days. Answer: Isolation is for ill/positive cases and that is a 10-day isolation period. Quarantine is for close contacts that have not tested positive yet and they must quarantine for 14 days. If they test positive during that quarantine period they then switch to the isolation guidelines. 11) If a person within a school tests positive do we shut down immediately or wait until all contact tracing has been completed? Answer: Depends on case load but as of now we are running it all and if the school is pushing the social distancing then that decreases the amount of close contacts. CDC does have recommendations on closures for 2-5 days. 12) You said social distancing is taken into consideration when determining close contacts, is that the same with masks? Answer: In some industries, yes but in a school setting most likely no. CDC only takes it into consideration if it is a procedural mask like the patient's masks when you go to a clinic. In a school or community setting we don't know what they are made of and if it's an effective mask. However, in public it still helps reduce the amount of viral shed of that person. 13) I thought I heard some schools are requiring masks for only junior high and high school kids, is that true? Answer: It is true for Ennis schools. Each school has their option per the Governor. AAP suggests the transmission is lower for ages under 11. We have also had

teachers ask if they could request a mandate for their specific class. School Boards Association said it is a reasonable request and it is absolutely optional. If the teacher has any health issues it would fall under an accommodation for ADA as well.

Enforcement related to Board of Health Orders or Governor Bullocks Directive

The Board has nothing on this topic at this time. They would like it moved to the next agenda.

Governor Bullocks Face Mask Directive

The Governors face mask directive was reviewed. Pam Birkeland the Superintendent of county schools stated that the Governor has excluded schools from this mandate. He has encouraged the Board of Health to enforce it if they are in a hot spot. Whitney stated that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends masks for kids over 11 years old. They believe younger children are not transmitting the virus. Melinda Tichenor recommends we align with the Governor's directive. Whitney Marsh made the motion to let Madison County schools make their own mask plan for staff and students for the 2020/2021 school year but not less stringent than the Governor's current directive. Melinda Tichenor seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously. Van also let everyone know that there is signage regarding the mask mandate on the DPHHS and Governor Bullock's websites. We should also post something in The Madisonian. Question 1) Does the Board have any recommendations on whether staff should be required and also what is the recommendation for students? AAP guidelines or Governor's directive as a business open to the public? Answer: Melissa's recommendation is if you can not social distance then yes you should wear a mask. Melinda also mentioned that she believes most school plans are requesting it.

Information release on positive cases discussion

Melissa reviewed the HIPAA law, CFR code for HIPAA privacy (45 CFR Code 164.514) and spoke with the Deputy County Attorney Justin Ekwall. Justin stated that he sees the value in the information but according to the federal CFR code it proves to be quite risky. Melinda would like schools to at least have that information. Melissa explained that we work with schools the same as businesses when we have any outbreak. The Public Health Department will work with a representative at each school directly. Question: 1) Does the Board currently have anything in place to ask a positive case if they want their information disclosed? Answer: There is a form to release liability for HIPAA. Ultimately it is up to the positive cases to allow their information to be released. We are finding that most are reluctant to share that information. 2) Was Justin's email specific to school information? Also do parents have to authorize information released to schools? Answer: Justin's email was regarding geographical area information not schools. Public Health has jurisdiction to work with schools directly for the safety of students, staff and families. 3) How does it apply to a school event that the public attends? Will they be notified? Spectator? Answer: It would depend on the interaction and if they were considered a close contact. The school wouldn't get their name but that a case was there and what time so they can work on close contact interaction. Spectators should be social distancing. The public requested to see the email from Justin that was addressed to the Board of Health members and Melissa Brummell. A few community members asked to see that document on the screen. Dr. Doug, Board Chair would prefer Justin

attend the next meeting to explain rather than have his email potentially misconstrued. The Board agreed. Bonnie O'Neill agreed with the community members that it is a public meeting and the public has the right to see it. They can contact the county attorney's office for a copy. Melissa explained that per the CFR code there are 2 ways to release information to the public, deidentify all information which includes not releasing town and having a statistician come in and do an assessment to prove numbers are high enough in the county to not identify the individuals. We have also reached out to the state DPHHS and they are releasing the smallest amount of information possible. We are legally obliged to protect our community's privacy. We will invite Justin Ekwall to the next meeting and readdress this issue.

Community Transmission status

Melissa informed the Board that Madison County is now in the community transmission status. The definition according to DPHHS is a community has identified cases who are unable to be linked with other known cases or travel. We will need the Board's approval to classify Madison County as community transmission. This will not invoke further restrictions unless the Board so chooses to do. This acknowledgement simply allows us to communicate that with the state and opens us up to more resources. If we reverted back to being able to identify the origin then we would no longer be in a community transmission status. Margaret asked that everyone remember we are all part of this giant experiment in this pandemic. Most of these rules and issues are changing quite frequently because it's new to everyone. Please be kind and patient. This is a giant learning curve for everyone including experts. Melinda Tichenor made the motion to move Madison County to community transmission status per data from the Public Health Department. Dayna Thergesen seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously. Doug also asked Bonnie if we could make a public statement regarding this change in status. Bonnie will update with a press release, the county websites and The Madisonian.

Additional Agenda Items

No additional items for discussion.

Approval of Minutes

Dayna Thergesen made the motion to approve the July 9, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Melinda Tichenor seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Melinda Tichenor made the motion to approve the July 16, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Dayna Thergesen seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting date:

The next COVID-19 meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 4:30 pm.

Meeting Adjourned:

A motion to adjourn was made by Melinda Tichenor at 8:12 pm, Margaret Bortko second the motion, all voted Aye, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Douglas B. Young, Chairman
Madison County Board of Health

Date Approved: August 18, 2020
Minutes prepared by:



Jennifer Martens, Public Health Clerk